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Operational activities for development: operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence related to operational activities for development

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Improving the governance of operational activities for development

General Assembly resolution 63/311

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, actionable proposals for the further improvement of the governance of operational activities for development

A. Introduction

1. General Assembly resolution 63/311 reflected a broad consensus on the need to enhance the functioning of existing governing bodies for greater system-wide coherence, particularly with a view to improving the strategic overview, policy coherence, coordination, funding and accountability of United Nations operational activities for development.[1] Member States also requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), to propose to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, actionable proposals for further improvement of governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations.

2. The present report responds to this mandate by putting forward proposals for improving the functioning of the governing bodies. The proposals are intended to help ensure that the tiers of governance, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies engaged in operational activities for development, function as an integrated "system", with clear roles and well-defined lines of responsibility and accountability. These proposals are provided as a basis for further consultation and dialogue among Member States and governing bodies on both the challenges and the opportunities that would be created by strengthening the governance of United Nations operational activities for development.

B. Key challenges in intergovernmental governance of United Nations operational activities for development[2]

3. As part of the process of preparing actionable proposals, many earlier reports and studies on United Nations reform in the economic, social and related areas have been examined, with particular focus on findings and recommendations to

[1] In the present report, the term "governing bodies" refers to the governance system of United Nations operational activities for development, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of specialized agencies. These governance structures vary greatly in terms of composition, role and functions, but all play a key role in fostering system-wide coherence of United Nations operational activities for development. They are primarily of an intergovernmental character.

[2] The Secretary-General's discussion paper of April 2009 on strengthening governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence, which was prepared to facilitate informal consultations of the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, provides a succinct description of the current intergovernmental governance system.

strengthen governance of United Nations operational activities for development. Key findings are presented in the annex to the present report. The reports and studies surveyed vary in nature: some were commissioned by intergovernmental bodies; others were produced by expert, regional and interest groups; and still others were submitted by the Secretary-General, former United Nations officials, independent commissions and think tanks. The quality of many of these studies reflects the political commitment attached to this issue by the international community over the years. There is a notable convergence in the analysis and recommendations of the various reports spanning a time period of more than 40 years. Some of the recommendations have been adopted by Member States over the years, but many have never been acted upon, including those proposing further strengthening of the guidance and coordination role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

4. The present report proposes that the upcoming consultations of Member States on governance should be organized within a framework that is driven by issues rather than focused on specific governing bodies. The options identified in the report as a possible way forward are intended to contribute to a consultative process through which decisions on strengthening the governance of United Nations operational activities for development could be agreed to. To facilitate the dialogue process, the report has identified four priority areas (see below) for enhancing the functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing United Nations operational activities for development, including key challenges and a possible way forward.

5. The report highlights some of the current weaknesses in governance and provides an analytical framework to facilitate in-depth dialogue. This could lead to significant recommendations by Member States to remove these weaknesses during the upcoming round of informal consultations of the General Assembly on system-wide coherence. The primary aim of the report is to facilitate constructive and pragmatic dialogue among Member States on priorities for improved functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing United Nations operational activities for development.

United Nations system-wide coherence begins in capitals of Member States

6. As has often been recognized, the process of enhancing the effectiveness of intergovernmental governance of United Nations operational activities for development will need to start in the capitals of Member States, as recommendations on strengthened coordination at the level of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can be undermined by contradictory policies pursued by representatives in governing bodies of individual United Nations organizations and entities. The fact that global development issues are interconnected, whereas in national Governments responsibilities fall within separate line ministries, poses a particularly important challenge for coherent policymaking on United Nations operational activities for development. However, without coherent policy and leadership within national Governments, disparate policies and fragmented implementation will undermine the effectiveness of United Nations development operations. Member States could therefore take the first step in enhancing system-wide coherence of United Nations operational activities for development by agreeing to adopt an "all-of-Government" approach to policymaking.

C. Priority areas for improving functioning of governing bodies

7. As noted above, the present report identifies four priority areas for enhancing the functioning of existing governing bodies, including key challenges and a possible way forward. In order to further advance inclusive system-wide engagement on these important issues, it is recommended that these proposals be reviewed by the governing bodies of relevant United Nations entities, taking into account their special legal status and autonomous nature. The four priority areas are set out and analysed below.

Priority area 1
Strengthen functional coherence between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, as well as the governing bodies of the specialized agencies

8. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are presented below.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(a) **Functionally coherent governance system:** establish/reaffirm the role of each tier of the governance system: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, as well as governing bodies of specialized agencies, in guiding, coordinating and implementing system-wide policies on United Nations operational activities for development	(a) (i) Undertake a review of existing legislation on the role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, in intergovernmental governance of United Nations operational activities for development, with a view to establishing a functionally coherent system (a) (ii) Perform a comparative analysis of agendas, calendars, programmes of work and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards as well as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Council for the World Food Programme (WFP) and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, and related subsidiary bodies, with a view to establishing more precise criteria for issues to be presented for discussion and decision-making at different tiers of the governance system[3]

[3] Development of such criteria should take into account the need for flexibility, e.g., in case of crisis situations or other unexpected international developments in socio-economic areas.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(b) **System-wide policy guidance:** strengthen the role of the General Assembly in establishing overall strategies, policies and priorities of United Nations operational activities for development	(b) Undertake an in-depth evaluation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process, including division of labour between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards, in guiding, coordinating and implementing system-wide policies with regard to United Nations operational activities for development[4]
(c) **Normative — operational linkages:** sharpen the distinction in work of the Economic and Social Council between providing leadership on development issues, policy coordination and operational policy for the United Nations development system	(c) (i) Strengthen the integrated programming of key elements of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, in particular the high-level and coordination segments, the annual ministerial review and the Development Cooperation Forum[5]
	(c) (ii) Enhance the role of the coordination segment in coherent governance of United Nations operational activities for development by focusing its deliberations, inter alia, on draft policy framework(s) developed collectively by United Nations system agencies and CEB through relevant clusters on themes of the annual ministerial review and the high-level segment

[4] The review of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process should involve consultations with key entities of the United Nations development system, including the specialized agencies. The evaluation could be performed by five highly reputable experts on United Nations operational activities for development, including legal aspects, appointed by the Secretary-General. The evaluation team should undertake consultations with national focal points dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at the country level as well as United Nations system entities. The report of the evaluation team should be submitted to the Secretary-General within four months from the start of work.

[5] The high-level segment, for example, could be positioned as the forum for providing normative and intellectual leadership on critical development issue(s). The annual ministerial review could focus its thematic deliberations on a few critical policy issues affecting the global implementation of the development goal under review. Regional annual ministerial review meetings could serve as a venue for discussing regional and national-level progress in realizing the internationally agreed development goals. The biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum has a mandate to promote normative — operational linkages in the work of the United Nations system, i.e., how the global development agenda is being mainstreamed into strategic plans and country programmes of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The Development Cooperation Forum could contribute to strengthening the governance role of the Economic and Social Council by promoting focused discussions on normative — operational linkages on the priority theme of the annual ministerial review. The role of the coordination segment in promoting integrated and coordinated follow-up to outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits within the United Nations system could be stepped up. The coordination segment could also serve as a forum for enhanced dialogue with specialized agencies, as well as among governing bodies of the agencies, funds and programmes on the specific theme under discussion. This would ensure that normative discussions taking place in the annual ministerial review, the high-level segment and the Development Cooperation Forum on progress in implementing development goals are translated into strategic policy framework(s), developed through collaborative inter-agency processes, for action by the United Nations system.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(d) **System-wide policy coordination:** improve guidance and coordination by the Economic and Social Council of United Nations operational activities for development	(d) Explore ways to enhance the impact of the guidance and coordination role of the Economic and Social Council in United Nations operational activities for development, for example by considering ways to strengthen substantive preparations for decision-making in the operational activities segment[6]
(e) **Multilateral operational coordination:** build greater synergy in the work of the United Nations system for development, including the specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant institutions	(e) The Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Chair of the United Nations Development Group, could institute annual consultations among key United Nations system entities, including relevant specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, multilateral agencies, regional development banks and coordinating bodies, to promote enhanced coherence in operational policies
(f) **System-wide policy implementation:** promote more effective implementation of system-wide policies at the level of the Executive Boards and governing bodies of specialized agencies	(f) (i) Strengthen the dialogue among bureaux or relevant political leadership of the governing bodies of United Nations entities on implementation of system-wide policies, such as by convening regular meetings of the bureaux of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, to promote coherent consideration of issues of common concern, or establishing a United Nations system consultative mechanism, reporting to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, comprising representative(s) of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council, the bureaux or relevant political leadership of governing bodies of the funds and programmes, as well as specialized agencies with significant engagement in operational activities, charged with performing annual reviews of progress in implementing system-wide policies

[6] In the survey of earlier reform proposals, several ideas have been presented to make system-wide guidance and coordination of United Nations operational activities for development by governing bodies at the central level more effective, including the creation of an operations board, a sustainable development board, a single governing body or a group composed of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at the country level, to provide advice and recommendations to Member States prior to decision-making, or, alternatively, empowering a smaller body from within the membership of the Economic and Social Council, composed of national officials responsible for United Nations operational activities for development at the country level, to help perform the guidance and coordination role of the Council.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
	(f) (ii) Promote enhanced harmonization of agenda-setting of the Executive Boards, including through further synchronization of agenda items of common interest to be considered at respective regular and annual sessions, and at a joint meeting of Boards with regard to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP[7]
	(f) (iii) Require the Executive Boards to develop agency action plans for implementing quadrennial comprehensive policy review guidance, with annual progress reporting to the Economic and Social Council
	(f) (iv) Explore new ways that governing bodies could consider issues of system-wide concern, including common country programmes[8]
	(f) (v) Each governing body could review functional coherence with other relevant entities; in this regard, the Bureaux of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP could review the functioning of the joint meeting of the Boards

[7] The annual joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF with the participation of WFP was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/12 B. The current selection of up to four or five agenda items for discussion in the joint meeting is made jointly by the Bureaux members of the three Executive Boards. Items selected for discussion generally cover specific operational matters or process issues of cross-cutting interest to the participating organizations.

[8] See further discussion in section II of the present report on possible modalities for submitting and approving common country programmes.

Priority area 2
Ensure that countries participate in governing bodies on an equal basis

9. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are presented below.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(a) **Equal participation and voice in governance:** strengthen participation of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at the country level in programme countries in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards	(a) (i) Each governing body to review equitable participation and develop proposals to further strengthen participation as necessary
	(a) (ii) Together with other parts of the United Nations system, Executive Boards could examine how they function, identifying good practices, considering suggestions to improve the inclusiveness and quality of debates and decision-making, and examining options to enhance the capacity of Member States delegations to shape the debate
	(a) (iii) Review experience of major multilateral institutions in strengthening participation of national policymakers of programme countries in governing bodies (e.g., World Bank Executive Director system)
	(a) (iv) Encourage discussion among Member States on how to better utilize existing resources to promote enhanced participation of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development at the country level in programme countries in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Executive Boards and the Economic and Social Council
	(a) (v) Consider establishing trust fund to facilitate participation of relevant officials from programme countries in meetings of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards, where appropriate

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
	(a) (vi) Consider providing special technical support to representatives of programme countries to facilitate more informed participation in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Executive Boards and the Economic and Social Council
	(a) (vii) Funds, programmes and specialized agencies to conduct more regular briefings to Member States on progress in implementing strategic priorities of respective entities, including system-wide policies

Priority area 3
Improve substantive preparations for meetings of governing bodies

10. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are presented below.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(a) **Secretariat support services:** further enhance capacity of secretariats of governing bodies to prepare meetings, monitor their results and provide quality documentation	(a) (i) Each governing body to perform functional review of its secretariat support services based on an agreed common methodology
	(a) (ii) Each governing body to evaluate annually quality of meeting documentation
	(a) (iii) Economic and Social Council secretariat to further strengthen substantive cooperation with specialized agencies in order to ensure stronger linkages to expertise, networks and policy analysis of those entities in preparation of meetings of the Council
	(a) (iv) Convene regular consultations among secretariats of governing bodies
	(a) (v) Bureaux of governing bodies to assume a more significant role in monitoring the quality of substantive preparations, in particular, agenda-setting, country representation and drafting of legislative decisions[9]

[9] As is currently the practice in UNICEF.

Priority area 4
Enhance impact of intergovernmental decisions

11. The key challenges and possible way forward in this area are presented below.

Key challenges	*Possible way forward*
(a) **Information for decision-making:** improve quality of information on United Nations operational activities for development to Member States to facilitate decision-making at the intergovernmental level	(a) Create central repository of information on United Nations operational activities for development[10]
(b) **Policy dialogue processes:** strengthen policy dialogue between Member States and United Nations decision makers on priority issues facing the United Nations development system	(b) Revitalize the operational activities and coordination segments of the Economic and Social Council as hubs for policy dialogue between national policymakers in programme countries and Executive Heads of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies
(c) **Intergovernmental negotiations:** current structures of intergovernmental negotiations in governing bodies often put a premium on political, rather than technical issues and approaches, to decision-making, which, over time, has made many resolutions lacking in meaningful and operationally relevant guidance	(c) (i) Make deliberative and negotiation processes in governing bodies more action-oriented through better definition of key operational criterion and analysis of field-level realities (c) (ii) Consider adopting an organizational model for the Economic and Social Council based on stand-alone segments convened throughout the year
(d) **Evaluation of system-wide policies:** strengthen the impact of evaluation of system-wide policies governing United Nations operational activities for development	(d) Establish system-wide evaluation function[11]

Proposed next step or steps

12. It is proposed that the four priority areas identified above provide the organizing framework for the intergovernmental consultative process on strengthening the functioning of existing governing bodies. Deliberations organized around these priority areas, drawing on the rich proposals made over the years, will help in defining the path to improved and more coherent governance structures.

D. Conclusion

13. The main conclusion of the present report is that improving the functioning of existing intergovernmental bodies is critical for more effective United Nations

[10] See further discussion on central repository in section V of the present report.
[11] See further discussion on proposed modalities for establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation function in section III of the present report.

operational activities for development at the country level. This will require Member States to take action in several areas, including committing to greater coherence in policymaking in capitals, establishing enhanced clarity on the roles and functions of different tiers of the governance system, significant strengthening of the capacity of programme countries to participate in intergovernmental policymaking on United Nations operational activities for development, making decision-making processes at all levels more action-oriented, and stepping up relevant secretariat support to the respective governing bodies based on a functional needs analysis.

II. Possible modalities for submission and approval of common country programmes on a voluntary basis

General Assembly resolution 63/311

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the United Nations Development Group, to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, modalities for the submission and approval of common country programmes on a voluntary basis, bearing in mind the importance of national ownership and effective intergovernmental oversight of the development process

A. Principles

14. The following principles have guided the development of proposals aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities for development, including the common country programming process:

(a) Focus on existing intergovernmental bodies with the purpose of making the United Nations development system more efficient and effective in its support to developing countries for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals;

(b) Maintaining the institutional and constitutional integrity and organizational mandate of each agency and its governing body;

(c) Responsiveness to national ownership and strengthened alignment of country programmes with national strategies as reflected in and in accordance with the guidelines for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework[12] where it has been developed;

(d) Be inclusive of all United Nations development system entities and responsive to its normative role as relevant to address the national priorities and consistent with the approved strategic plan of the respective organizations;

[12] The United Nations Development Group approved a United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance package in November 2009, comprising: "How to prepare a UNDAF: Part I, Guidelines for United Nations country teams; and Part II, Technical guidance for United Nations country teams".

(e) Primary responsibility of national Governments for the formulation of common country programmes, in consultation with the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team and other relevant partners, as appropriate;

(f) Led by the Government and a strengthened Resident Coordinator and United Nations country team with collaborative partnership among United Nations resident and non-resident specialized agencies, funds and programmes at both Headquarters and regional and country levels to ensure greater coherence at the country level;

(g) Grounded in results-based planning and management approaches;

(h) Allow the calendar of submission of the common country programme to the relevant approving entity as appropriate to be flexible based on the Government's planning cycle.

B. Current country programme approval mechanisms

15. National ownership is reflected in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is developed under the Government's leadership and articulates the strategic focus of the United Nations country team in response to national priorities. The current process of approval of the contribution of United Nations agencies to the country programmes through the governing bodies and internal mechanisms, as appropriate, is designed to facilitate oversight, within a framework that recognizes national ownership and ensures coherence of the United Nations development system at the country level in support to national priorities.

1. Funds and programmes

16. The Executive Boards of funds and programmes review and approve multi-year cooperation programmes, mainly by focusing on the consistency and coherence of these programmes with the respective multi-year strategic plan. In order to improve results-based planning and management, and to strengthen the alignment between country programme documents and national strategies, and also the medium-term strategic plan and multi-year funding framework as approved by the respective Executive Board, the country programme document includes agency-specific results that contribute to the achievement of the outcomes established in the results matrix of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

17. After discussion and comments by the Executive Boards at the annual session, the country programmes, including indicative core and non-core funding envelopes where appropriate, are normally approved at the second regular session on a no-objection basis without presentation or discussion, unless at least five members inform the secretariat in writing before the meeting of their wish to bring a particular country programme before the Executive Board. This process is intended to ensure effective participation of the Executive Board and also to maximize efficiency in the consultation and approval process. The approval process thus strikes a balance between the legitimate oversight role of the Executive Board and demands for operational efficiency.

2. Specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations Secretariat

18. The specialized agencies and the entities of the United Nations Secretariat often have different arrangements than the multi-year cooperation programmes described above for the funds and programmes. They prepare different types of results-based country strategies, frameworks and programmes which define medium-term outcomes to be achieved through projects or programmes at the country level, in line with their multi-year corporate strategic plans and national priorities. These programmes mainly represent indicative frameworks, the implementation of which depends on resource mobilization.

19. The governing bodies of specialized agencies — resident and non-resident — and other entities of the United Nations Secretariat are not required to approve these documents. In the case of some of these agencies their country-level activities are guided by their respective programme guidelines and in certain cases are approved at the regional level.

C. Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities for development

20. It is important to distinguish between the approval of country programmes and the nature of intergovernmental oversight exercised by entities such as the governing and legislative bodies of United Nations system agencies, funds and programmes on the one hand and the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the other. In the case of specialized agencies, oversight is provided by their respective governing bodies in accordance with their policies and procedures. In the case of the funds and programmes, the Executive Boards, in addition to approving country programmes, are responsible for providing intergovernmental support and supervision in accordance with the overall policy of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and for ensuring that they are responsive to the needs and priorities of recipient countries (see General Assembly resolution 48/162), including:

(a) Implementing policies formulated by the Assembly and coordination and guidance from the Council;

(b) Approving programmes, including country programmes;

(c) Deciding on administrative and financial plans and budgets;

(d) Recommending new initiatives to the Economic and Social Council, and through it to the General Assembly, as necessary.

21. Through the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the General Assembly identifies key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system. The Economic and Social Council is mandated to provide coordination and guidance to the United Nations system in close consultation with the specialized agencies, including related to the implementation of the policy guidance of the Assembly that is established through the comprehensive policy review process. The Council discharges its role in coordinating and monitoring policy guidance established by the Assembly largely through its operational activities segment. The coordination segment of the Council

is devoted to the coordination of policies and activities of the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system in the economic and social areas. It may coordinate the activities of the specialized agencies through consultations with and recommendations to such agencies and through recommendations to the Assembly and to the States Members of the United Nations.

22. A key concern of the Member States has been to ensure coherence in the United Nations system support at the country level. Such concerns are reflected in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review guidance, which constitutes the basis for evaluating the work of the United Nations country teams. Currently, the individual agency strategic plans, guidance notes and other operational instruments are formulated to reflect the resolutions of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, conferences and summit outcomes and resolutions and decisions of the various organs of the United Nations system. Each agency also submits reports to the Economic and Social Council on its implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In addition, the Secretary-General presents several reports to the Council and the Assembly on various aspects of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, including on simplification and harmonization, the Resident Coordinator system and funding.

23. In its resolution 63/311, the General Assembly reaffirmed that the strengthening of the governance of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should focus on enhancing existing intergovernmental bodies with the purpose of making the United Nations development system more efficient and effective in its support to developing countries for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. A review of the level of effectiveness of the governance processes by the Economic and Social Council could therefore focus on the potential need for reform of its working methods in order to determine whether different modalities are required to enable the Council to play its mandated role. This may require that the respective governing bodies, including those of the specialized agencies, allocate dedicated segments for in-depth annual discussions specifically on issues related to the coherence of United Nations operational activities for development, including among the whole United Nations country team. These discussions would be reflected in each agency's annual report to the Economic and Social Council allowing the Council to consider how responsive the agencies are to the requirements of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

D. Key elements of the common country programme document

24. The United Nations development system has little experience with the development of common country programme documents, although considerable experience exists in preparing United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. The need for the development of common country programmes has been raised in the context of the ongoing experience of the Delivering as one initiative in pilot countries. In order to fulfil the requirements for approval of United Nations agencies' contributions to country programmes, a common country programmes document, consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, should:

(a) Include a clear statement of the strategic focus of the country programme and the manner in which it responds to national priorities, actions being taken to

ensure coherence at the country level, and results to be achieved, with the available or indicative resources to be approved by the respective governing bodies or internal approval mechanism in view of the need to report in a results-based framework to Member States;

(b) Include a clear description of individual agencies' proposed/indicative contribution to the common country programme that would allow the governing body or internal approval mechanism of the agencies, as appropriate, to establish linkages with their respective strategic plans;

(c) Keep the process simple, ensuring that the timeline between preparation of a common country programme and its approval is short and flexible, allowing for its alignment with the national planning cycle and also ensuring that the preparation of common country programmes by the United Nations system at the country level is short and flexible;

(d) Comply with the United Nations requirement that limits the word count of documents originating in the Secretariat to 16 pages.[13]

E. Options

Option 1
Common country programme presented to governing bodies of participating United Nations agencies

25. This option would require approval at the level of governing bodies. This is not currently required for specialized agencies, and this would not be changed under this option. This option presupposes complete coherence among Member States in their representation to different United Nations organizations and could raise the possibility of disagreement among Executive Boards on agency-specific coverage. In order to address such disagreement, an intergovernmental conflict resolution or referral mechanism would have to be devised, and this could add uncertainty to the process and decrease timeliness. This could partly be addressed by requiring that the governing bodies focus their review and approval on agency-specific contributions to the country programme and their alignment with the respective strategic plan.

Option 2
Common country programme consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework[14] presented to each governing body and internal agency mechanism, as appropriate, including a structured brief description of the agency-specific contribution, and with a results matrix attached as an annex for approval

26. Approval by the relevant governing bodies or internal mechanisms, as appropriate, would be based on an assessment of whether the various elements of the agency-specific programme reflect the relevant priorities of the respective

[13] In its resolution 52/214, sect. B, paragraph 4, the General Assembly takes note of the decision of the Secretary-General that documents originating in the Secretariat should be no longer than 16 pages.

[14] Under this option, the United Nations country team may choose to prepare on a voluntary basis, under the United Nations Development Group-approved guidelines, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework action plan as the basis for the common country programme.

strategic plan and overall mandate. The current approval process of specialized agencies and of funds and programmes would not be changed. In the case of specialized agencies, the document could be submitted to their respective governing bodies for information only.

27. The current two-session review and approval by the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes could also be reconsidered, allowing, for example, for the approval to be tacit after two weeks of posting of the revised common country programme document on the website, and shortening the time period for posting the revised document on the website from six weeks to four weeks. This option also takes into account that the governing bodies of funds and programmes hold annual discussions on issues of coherence, which are reflected in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council. The option also responds to the call to further streamline and simplify the current process of approving the contribution of agencies to country programmes.

Option 3
Common country programme presented to the Economic and Social Council

28. A common country programme document, as described in options 1 or 2, would be presented to the Economic and Social Council for approval. This would require a fundamental change both in the mandate and working methods of the Council and in its legal relationship to the specialized agencies. It would also require a change in the current mandate of other governing bodies and in the organization and scheduling of their work.

Option 4
Common country programme presented to the joint meeting of Executive Boards

29. A common country programme document, as described in options 1 or 2, would be presented to the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP for approval. As the current mandate of the joint meeting is to discuss selected priority issues of common concern, this option would require a fundamental change in the mandate and composition of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards.

Additional scenarios

30. A common country programme document, as described in options 1 and 2, is presented to the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council for discussion and sent to the governing bodies or other relevant entities of the respective agencies for approval. The outcome of the discussion would be non-binding and considered by the Executive Boards or relevant approval bodies when discussing the country programme document. This would significantly change the mandated role of the Economic and Social Council. In addition, it would add at least two additional layers to the approval process, and would have implications for the calendar of discussions of country programmes by governing bodies and approval mechanisms, thus reducing flexibility to align these more closely to the national planning cycles.

31. A common country programme document, as described in options 1 and 2, would be reviewed at the country level by representatives of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes concerned prior to final submission to governing

bodies for formal approval. The review process could be led by the Government and supported by a steering committee co-chaired by the Government and the Resident Coordinator, as is currently the case in some countries. As appropriate, governing bodies could participate in the process and submit written or oral comments to the Chair or Co-Chairs for consideration during the country-level review. The common country programme would subsequently, and, as necessary, be sent to the governing bodies or other relevant agency approval mechanisms for formal review and approval on a no-objection basis. Such a "holistic" review at the country level would strengthen the principle of national ownership as the centrepiece of national development plans and priorities, making it easier for country leadership to be clearly demonstrated.

F. Proposed modality for submission and approval of common country programmes on a voluntary basis

32. The above-mentioned options have been identified as modalities for possible consideration by the General Assembly in response to paragraph 7 of its resolution 63/311. The consideration process by the Assembly could recall the guiding principles outlined in section III below regarding the preferable modality.[15]

33. A possible draft resolution could contain the following elements:

The General Assembly,

Considering the different options for defining the common country programme submission and approval mechanism, bearing in mind the mandates of governing bodies of the United Nations agencies, and with a view to proposing to the General Assembly one widely accepted modality for the submission and approval of a common country programme,

Recalling that the governing bodies of funds and programmes hold annual discussions on issues of coherence, which are reflected in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council, while specialized agencies do not submit similar reports to the Council,

Considering the call to further streamline and simplify the current process of approving the contribution of agencies to country programmes,

1. *Invites* countries, on a voluntary basis, to present a common country programme document, consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and containing a clear statement of the strategic focus of the country programme in line with national priorities, actions being taken to ensure coherence at the country level and results to be achieved with the available or indicative resources, and with a brief description of an agency-

[15] Four options for submitting and approving common country programmes have been presented for the consideration of Member States, including an outline of the issues underlying each option. However, not all the options have been cleared by the legal offices of all the agencies and discussed by the respective governing bodies; the present report should therefore be considered a work-in-progress. Only option 2, presented above in the form of a draft resolution, is seen to meet the guiding principles outlined in section III of the report. The other options would in most cases require further legal review and agreement by agency governing bodies, which would need to be informed of such discussions in the General Assembly.

specific results matrix attached as an annex, for approval by the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes or internal mechanism in the case of the United Nations specialized agencies, as appropriate;

2. *Notes* that the approval of each agency's contribution will be based on an assessment of whether the elements of the agency-specific programme reflect the priorities of its strategic plan and overall mandate;

3. *Encourages* further efforts by governing bodies of United Nations agencies, in cases where such approval is required, to ensure that the calendar of submission and approval of the common country programme documents is aligned with the planning cycle of the Government.

III. Key principles for establishing an independent system-wide evaluation mechanism

General Assembly resolution 63/311

8. *Reaffirms* the importance of strengthening evaluation as a United Nations system function and the guidance contained to this effect in its resolution 62/208, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to propose to the General Assembly, at its sixty-fourth session, modalities for the establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation mechanism to assess system-wide efficiency, effectiveness and performance, bearing in mind the evaluation functions carried out by respective United Nations organizations, the Joint Inspection Unit and the United Nations Evaluation Group

34. The general framework presented in the present section builds on discussions undertaken among United Nations organizations within the CEB framework in the past two years, as part of broader discussion on the harmonization of business practices and need for enhanced transparency and accountability in the United Nations system. During the discussions, CEB also took note of the report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment (A/61/583), more specifically of the recommendation that, to promote transparency and accountability, a United Nations common evaluation system should be established by 2008, on the basis of a common evaluation methodology.

35. The views consistently expressed by CEB in the course of these discussions were highly supportive of enhancing the capacity and strength of the evaluation function across the United Nations system, as a critical way of increasing the credibility, effectiveness and impact of the programmes of United Nations system organizations. The proposed framework for a system-wide evaluation mechanism includes principles and modalities suggested in subsequently refined contributions to the CEB discussion by the United Nations Evaluation Group, which brings together the heads of evaluation from throughout the United Nations system. The proposal also takes into due consideration the valuable experience gained in carrying out the evaluability assessments of the Delivering as one programme country pilots.

36. The limitations of the ad hoc approach adopted in the evaluability assessments reinforced the rationale for establishing an independent unit to conduct evaluations on specific system-wide issues of general concern, and for strengthening the policies and methodologies for evaluation in the system. Noticeable deficiencies of ad hoc management arrangements for system-wide evaluations were identified in the following areas:

(a) Unpredictable funding and subsequent inability to plan for the long term;

(b) Increased burden on individual participating evaluation units vis-à-vis their core responsibilities, particularly for smaller organizations;

(c) Perceived lack of independence by member countries.

37. The proposed framework for a system-wide evaluation mechanism is inspired by a number of key principles, as follows:

(a) Given the complexity of United Nations operations, it is considered essential, for coherence and to avoid duplication, that the proposed system-wide evaluation unit work in tandem with the existing evaluation units in the United Nations system organizations;

(b) To ensure credibility, the United Nations-wide evaluation system would have to be independent in its work. Its evaluations would also have to meet the priority needs of stakeholders, including the general public in Member States;

(c) Development of evaluation capacity in the Member States should be promoted, including a culture of independent evaluation, so that Member States can progressively take the lead in the evaluation of programmes designed for their benefit.

38. The basic principles that were taken into account in responding to the mandate given by the General Assembly to establish a system-wide evaluation mechanism can therefore be summarized as follows:

(a) Strengthening of evaluation capacity in programme countries, as also mandated in General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development;

(b) Development of a solution that is integrated into the framework of evaluation functions already provided by United Nations organizations and by existing oversight and professional bodies, with a view to avoiding duplication and to ensure efficient usage of resources, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/311;

(c) Affirmation of paramount requirement of independence for any proposed new mechanism.

39. In accordance with these principles, the proposed United Nations-wide evaluation system would have a three-tier structure, consisting of:

(a) A new independent unit that would drive the programme of work for system-wide evaluations;

(b) Evaluation functions in each of the organizations of the United Nations system;

(c) The professional network of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

40. The proposal developed by the CEB secretariat for a system-wide evaluation mechanism is currently under consultation in the United Nations Evaluation Group, which includes, with an observer status, the Joint Inspection Unit. The proposal further outlines the framework for such a mechanism, especially with respect to its possible institutional, organizational and funding arrangements. The consultative process is expected to be completed in early January 2010, leading to the finalization of the proposal.

IV. Strengthening financial reporting on operational activities for development

General Assembly resolution 63/311

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his comprehensive statistical analysis of the financing of operational activities for development further analysis and actionable proposals on the current situation and perspectives in respect of core and non-core funding for the United Nations development system, notably the implications of various forms of non-core funding, in terms of predictability, country ownership and the implementation of intergovernmental mandates

A. Improving coverage, quality and comparability of financial reporting

41. The Secretary-General has stepped up efforts to update the concepts, definitions and classifications underlying the comprehensive statistical analysis of the financing of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (statistical compendium). The objective of this effort is to improve the quality and comparability of the data and better represent the changing mandates and operations of the United Nations system. Inter-agency consultations, notably among UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and the specialized agencies, on financial reporting issues have intensified in recent years, leading to improved classification of contributions received by United Nations entities.

42. The United Nations Development Group is also forming a working group charged with simplifying and harmonizing financial reporting by creating common guidelines to be used by United Nations entities in classifying expenditures. Having a more consistent classification of expenditures across different United Nations entities will facilitate disaggregated reporting of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding-related resource flows.

43. Significant progress has also been made in broadening the coverage of the statistical compendium. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat is in the process of integrating the UNDP report on technical cooperation of the United Nations system into the statistical compendium. A single consolidated report to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2010 will provide analysis of financial data for the 2008 calendar year. Furthermore, the Department plans to collect information directly from 37 United Nations entities in preparing the 2010 statistical compendium, compared with just seven entities in 2007.

B. Strengthening reporting on disaggregated non-core funding flows

44. Recent system-wide efforts to improve reporting on multi-donor trust funds are providing a solid platform for more disaggregated analysis of extrabudgetary resource flows. The United Nations Development Group is establishing a system-wide database on multi-donor trust funds, which will provide up-to-date information on all such trust funds, including those administered by UNDP and other United Nations entities, with links to related websites of the entities concerned. The 2009 statistical compendium contained for the first time information on all contributions to and disbursements from multi-donor trust funds administered by the UNDP Multi-Donor Trust Funds Office. The Department is collecting similar information on multi-donor trust funds administered by other entities within the United Nations system.

45. The 2010 statistical compendium will focus in particular on strengthening financial reporting on extrabudgetary resource flows, with further analysis and actionable proposals on the current situation and perspectives in respect of core and non-core funding for the United Nations development system, notably the implications of various forms of non-core funding in terms of predictability, national ownership and implementation of intergovernmental mandates. Towards that end, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in partnership with CEB, will conduct a series of consultations with United Nations system entities to discuss how to further improve the coverage, timeliness, reliability, quality and comparability of financial reporting on the six main funding streams of non-core resource flows.

C. Enhancing timeliness in financial reporting

46. Due to the timing of reporting to the Economic and Social Council, the statistical compendium is released in May each year, a time when the final data from the previous calendar year is not yet available. The statistical compendium thus contains information that is almost two years old by the time it is issued. However, from 2010 onwards, the financial reporting on United Nations development operations will be further improved to enable more timely presentation of funding information to Member States through the following measures:

(a) Publishing aggregate funding figures for United Nations operational activities for development for the previous year in May, with analysis provided of overall trends in resources flows;

(b) Making available a detailed breakdown of contributions and expenditures of United Nations operational activities for development for the previous year in October/November, both online and in an analytical policy brief, together with informative tables and graphs;

(c) Strengthening policy analysis in the statistical compendium, with greater focus on providing detailed data and information on funding flows online, as well as through periodic updates by the Secretariat on financial issues.

47. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in line with the above strategy, intends to release information on aggregate funding flows for 2008 by the end of January 2010, with similar reporting on overall resource flows in 2009

expected to be issued in May 2010. These changes in the reporting process will accelerate the information flow to Member States on aggregate funding figures by one year and accelerate the provision of a more detailed breakdown of contributions and expenditures by nine months.

D. Enhancing online access to funding information

48. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is in the process of designing a home page on the website of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination that will provide online access to all financial information contained in the statistical compendium, as an interim measure until the central repository of CEB is operational. The new home page is expected to be launched in the latter half of 2010.

V. Creating a central repository on operational activities for development

General Assembly resolution 63/311

16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to create a central repository of information on operational activities for development ... building on the comprehensive statistical analysis of the financing of operational activities for development, and to ensure appropriate and user-friendly online access and regular updating of the information contained therein

A. Establishment of a system-wide financial reporting system

49. The central repository of information on United Nations operational activities for development will be part of a system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system, building on the existing biennial CEB mandate to collect and publish financial information on the entire United Nations system (see A/63/185).

50. The creation of the United Nations system-wide financial statistics database and reporting system is expected to enhance the scope and detail of existing financial reporting to Member States, including on United Nations operational activities for development. This will be achieved by developing a comprehensive financial database through the integration of existing ones and by establishing an online platform to compile, analyse and report on such information. Additional objectives include the homogenization and strengthening of methodological consistency of financial data collected by the CEB secretariat from United Nations system organizations.

51. The expected benefits of the new system include one-stop access by Member States and inter-agency and coordination bodies to comprehensive, reliable, manageable and ready-to-use financial information on the entire United Nations system and enhanced information flow on extrabudgetary contributions to United Nations organizations, including those from non-State donors. The new database and reporting system is expected to contribute directly to diffusing and making available, through a harmonized and inclusive system, to all stakeholders of the

United Nations system, the enormous knowledge capital the United Nations system produces or generates.

52. This initiative is part of the High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business Practices in the United Nations System. A first phase of the project includes the launch, expected in early 2010, of a dedicated section of the CEB website, with analysis and charts based on the report of the Secretary-General on the budgetary and financial situation of the organizations of the United Nations system (see A/63/185), which contains comprehensive financial data on three consecutive bienniums — 2002-2003, 2004-2006 and 2006-2007 — in accordance with audited financial statements and estimates of regular and extrabudgetary income for the biennium 2008-2009.

B. Expected time frame for launching a central repository

53. The second and conclusive phase of the project will be launched concurrently with the first one, and has an estimated time frame for completion of two years. The proposed solution is based on centralized collection and analysis of financial data. Using common data-exchange standards, reporting requirements and derived business rules, organizations would be provided with one platform to manage the submission, validation and reporting of financial data. This service will be made available on the Internet (or Extranet) and a workflow mechanism will control publishing rights and which reports are made available to which stakeholder group. A centralized web content management solution, with financial reporting capabilities, would implement one standard for the categorization and subsequent reporting of financial data.

VI. Independent evaluation of lessons learned from Delivering as one programme country pilots

General Assembly resolution 63/311

17. *Acknowledges* the interim arrangements of the progress made and the challenges remaining in efforts to increase coherence in country-level programming, including in the "programme country pilots

18. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to support "programme country pilot" countries to undertake expeditiously their own country-led evaluations with the participation of relevant stakeholders and with the technical support of the United Nations Evaluation Group

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to urgently undertake arrangements for an independent evaluation of lessons learned from the above efforts, as requested in resolution 62/208, and to inform the General Assembly of the modalities and terms of reference of this independent evaluation at its sixty-fourth session

54. In its resolution 63/311, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to urgently undertake arrangements for an independent evaluation of lessons learned of the Delivering as one initiative and to inform the General Assembly of the modalities and terms of reference of this independent evaluation at its sixty-fourth

session. The Assembly also underscored that the independent evaluation should be guided by the principles contained in its resolution 62/208 with regard to national ownership and leadership, and should be conducted in the context of system-wide norms and standards, should be based on an inclusive, transparent, objective and independent approach and that its outcome should be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session.

55. The present section addresses the purpose, timing and scope of the evaluation. It also outlines some of the principles involved and proposes options for management of the evaluation. It is suggested that the terms of reference be developed fully once the management arrangements are decided upon so that the process can be fully transparent, inclusive, objective and independent.

A. Purpose

56. The purpose is twofold: firstly, the evaluation should feed into the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly; secondly, it should also contribute to Assembly consultations on system-wide coherence. Users of the evaluation will include national decision makers and organizations of the United Nations system. The evaluation will be made publicly available for broader access.

B. Timing

57. If the evaluation is to feed into the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review process, it should be completed by mid-2011 or the end of 2011 at the latest. This deadline will also meet the requirement in the General Assembly resolution that the evaluation should be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-sixth session. To achieve this deadline, the evaluation should be commenced around July 2010 and certainly no later than the end of 2010. This timing will also ensure that the country-led evaluations are completed before the independent evaluation has commenced. The outcome statement of an intergovernmental meeting on programme country pilots held in Kigali in October 2009 states that the country-led evaluations will be completed by 1 July 2010.

C. Scope

58. If the independent evaluation is to extract lessons learned from the programme country pilots, then the scope of the exercise should cover each of these initiatives as well as all related United Nations reform measures at the Headquarters and regional levels. The evaluation will cover both process and results. The full scope of the independent evaluation would be detailed through the consultative process leading to the preparation of terms of reference.

59. In its resolution 63/311, the General Assembly underscored that the independent evaluation should be guided by the principles of national ownership and leadership. To achieve this, it is particularly important that the relationship between the country-led evaluations and the independent evaluation be addressed explicitly in the terms of reference for the latter.

60. There should be no duplication between these two evaluation processes. The independent evaluation should build on the country-led evaluations provided that they meet adequate quality standards, and should only carry out additional work in the countries concerned if this can be shown to add value to the evaluation process. The independent evaluation will have to carry out more detailed primary data collection in the programme countries that do not conduct country-led evaluations. A useful first step in the independent evaluation process would be to conduct an independent analysis of the country-led evaluations.

D. Management options

61. General Assembly resolution 63/311 specifies that the evaluation should be conducted in an inclusive, transparent, objective and independent manner in the context of United Nations system-wide norms and standards. Management arrangements should be chosen to ensure that the evaluation is professionally conducted in line with these principles, as well as the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system. The evaluation should be conducted by a team of professional evaluators. There would appear to be two viable management options in conducting an evaluation of this nature.

First option

62. The first option would be to identify an existing evaluation function that has the mandate to deliver an exercise of this nature. In the absence of an independent United Nations system-wide evaluation mechanism, for which General Assembly resolution 63/311 requests the Secretary-General to formulate options, the only existing function that could undertake this type of evaluation is the Joint Inspection Unit. If the Joint Inspection Unit were to be tasked with undertaking this evaluation, it would need to demonstrate its capacity to do so in line with agreed principles. It would be important to have a reference group in place that would be inclusive and would advise on the evaluation process. Clear terms of reference should be developed and an independent professional evaluation team contracted to conduct the evaluation in line with system-wide norms and standards.

Second option

63. The second option would be to set up an ad hoc arrangement for managing the independent evaluation. The Secretary-General could establish an evaluation management group that would oversee the evaluation process. The evaluation management group would commission an independent evaluation team to conduct the evaluation. This model would have the advantage of inclusiveness within the management arrangement. The evaluation management group could be nominated by regional groupings and pilot countries (perhaps a total of six members), consisting of individuals belonging to established evaluation institutions with strong experience in managing independent evaluations and with in-depth knowledge of system-wide coherence issues.

64. If the ad hoc arrangement is chosen, it would be advisable to have a professional evaluation secretariat to support the evaluation management group. One option would be to request an existing United Nations evaluation function to

carry out this secretariat support. Whichever management arrangement is selected, it will be important to ensure that the evaluation management places on record the quality assurance process it will put in place to ensure that the independent evaluation is conducted in line with system-wide norms and standards.

E. Funding

65. The cost of the independent evaluation will depend on the scope and methodology employed and the management arrangements adopted. Once a management arrangement has been agreed, a budget should be drawn up for the evaluation and agreement reached on how to finance this important undertaking.

VII. Reporting on harmonization of business practices

General Assembly resolution 63/311

> 21. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to continue progress in the simplification and harmonization of business practices within the United Nations development system, and requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with Chief Executives Board, to regularly inform the Economic and Social Council about progress being made and challenges encountered in this regard and to refer any matter requiring an intergovernmental decision to the relevant intergovernmental bodies

66. CEB is leading the efforts to simplify and harmonize business practices within the United Nations development system through the Plan of Action for the Harmonization of Business Practices in the United Nations System, which was developed within the framework of HLCM, with the active and full contribution of the entire United Nations system (United Nations Secretariat, funds and programmes, and specialized agencies). In the third quarter of 2007, the full CEB membership at the Executive Heads level, led by the Secretary-General, endorsed the Plan of Action.

67. The Plan of Action is built on the belief that, within a system structured around a variety of mandates, an increased coherence in the working modalities of the member organizations would contribute significantly to their ability to deliver better programmatic results, while in the medium and long terms allowing for a substitution or reduction of costs to be derived by individual organizations. The Plan of Action was prepared on the basis of experience coming out of the Delivering as one pilots and on the ad hoc solutions that are being developed to address bottlenecks in those initiatives, with a view to finding and agreeing on system-wide solutions.

68. This approach ensures the alignment of country-level operations with the strategic directions and priorities pursued at the policy level. It also further ensures that the needs of country operations are one of the cornerstones for harmonization of the business practices at the global level. Following approval by CEB of the Plan of Action in April 2008, it was presented on 13 June 2008 to the General Assembly by the HLCM Chair in the context of the informal consultations of the Assembly on system-wide coherence.

69. Member States generally noted their support for the work of CEB in this area, underlying the importance of respecting existing mandates and the division of labour between the various United Nations organs with respect to ongoing management reforms. In the above meeting, the HLCM Chair emphasized that the Plan of Action was taking into account previous recommendations made by the internal and external oversight bodies of member organizations and already endorsed by their governing bodies. The general support to proceed with this work was then formally recorded in General Assembly resolution 62/277 on system-wide coherence. A funding proposal outlining the scope and objective of the Plan of Action was transmitted to potential donors in October 2008.

70. In July 2009, the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council also included a session on the theme "Simplification and harmonization: how far the United Nations system has gone", at which Member States were briefed on progress made by the Vice-Chair of HLCM. In its resolution 2009/1, concerning the simplification and harmonization of business practices, the Economic and Social Council, while acknowledging that progress was being achieved, noted that many procedures required further harmonization, as identified in the Plan of Action, and requested the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies to explore sources of financing to support the implementation of the Plan of Action, including discussion with their respective governing bodies on the allocation of funds through their respective support budgets.

71. In the light of the support and guidance received by Member States, CEB recently reviewed the projects included in the Plan of Action to ensure their relevance in the current context of financial constraints, and selected its priorities among the activities included in the original funding proposal, so as to take into consideration the initial work that had already been undertaken and carry the activities forward from a better starting position. The first initiative that has been launched from the Plan of Action is a project intended to produce procedures and guidelines with regard to vendor eligibility and due process dealing with vendors suspected, accused of and/or proven guilty of misconduct in line with the Supplier Code of Conduct (known as the Vendor Eligibility Project). The HLCM Procurement and Legal Networks are working in close cooperation on this project.

72. In addition to briefings to Member States on progress being made in this initiative, the CEB website has established a section dedicated to the HLCM Plan of Action. The new release of the website, expected in early 2010, will provide more detailed information on the implementation of the Plan of Action in a user-friendly format. The business practices section, which is already available, will be kept up-to-date with details on the various initiatives launched within the framework of the HLCM Plan of Action (see http://www.unsceb.org/ceb/priorities/business-practices).

73. Simultaneously with the efforts of HLCM, the United Nations Development Group is working to find solutions for critical bottlenecks in business practices at the country level. In 2009, in cooperation with HLCM, solutions have been developed in the areas of common procurement at the country level covering the setting up of common procurement teams, the development and use of common long-term agreements and a common contracts committee. In some of the Delivering as one pilot countries, solutions have been designed for the inter-linking of information and communications technology systems with a view to increasing

efficiency and reducing costs. Developments in the areas of both procurement and information and communications technology have now been issued as global guidance that is available to other countries concerning the efforts of the United Nations development system to bring about greater efficiency and effectiveness in country office business operations.

74. In response to the outcome of the most recent comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly, the United Nations Development Group is developing an approach for the deployment of savings in operational activities into programmes at the country level. The relevant working group of the United Nations Development Group has reached a preliminary agreement that, where relevant, agencies would put in place processes for the identification and measurement of net savings from operational activities. In view of its complexity, this will need to be tried on an experimental basis to assess the scale of net savings, particularly in relation to the costs that may be incurred in putting in place a system for their identification. The United Nations country teams in some of the pilot countries are already aligning their planning and budgeting with the national financial cycles to allow for improved planning and implementation.

Annex

Key recommendations of earlier reports and studies on improving the functioning of governing bodies in respect of United Nations operational activities for development[a]

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
1. Commission on International Development: *Partners in Development* **(Pearson Report)** (1969)		Improve review of issues relating to the whole of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions Institutionalize coordination among the United Nations agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, multilateral agencies, regional development banks and coordinating bodies in order to: • Further linkages between aid and development policies and those dealing with trade, monetary policy and private capital movements • Move towards standardized performance assessments across the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions • Establish authoritative estimates of development objectives and aid requirements • Provide balanced and impartial reviews of donor aid policies and programmes

[a] Many of the reports and studies examined in this annex resulted in adoption of General Assembly resolutions with significant implications for the functioning of intergovernmental bodies governing United Nations development operations. The following General Assembly resolutions are particularly relevant in this context: 46/182, 50/227, 62/208 and 63/311. Additional reports that may be of interest include those submitted earlier by the Secretary-General to facilitate intergovernmental deliberations on such issues, including his recent discussion paper on strengthening governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence (April 2009).

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
2. Report of Group of Experts on the Structure of United Nations system: **Gardner Report** (1975)	**Working methods** Convene well-prepared sessions of the General Assembly or proposed Development Committee, rather than ad hoc world conferences Organize Economic and Social Council work programme on biennial basis, with short and frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year, in New York, Geneva or other cities such as Nairobi, depending on topic and secretariat location Devote initial substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (presumably in January) to identification of themes and issues to be included in biennial work programme Design Economic and Social Council work programme so that all issues currently addressed by subsidiary bodies are discussed over a two-year cycle, with a one-week ministerial session (e.g. last week of June) devoted to overall policy review, followed by separate discussions, two weeks each, first, on programme budgets and medium-term plans of entire United Nations system, and, second, to review operational activities **Representation** Officials from capitals having the required expertise, flexible instructions and capacity to follow up directly on implementation of agreed decisions would attend Economic and Social Council sessions, with travel support provided to developing country participants	**General Assembly** Strengthen central role of the General Assembly in global policymaking Rename Second Committee as Development Committee charged with establishing overall global development policies **Economic and Social Council** Prepare meetings of proposed Development Committee Coordinate policymaking within United Nations system on development issues and operational activities for development, including monitoring of implementation Assume direct responsibility for work performed by subsidiary bodies except regional commissions and others of highly specialized nature (e.g., Statistical Commission)[b] Establish small negotiation groups to facilitate consensus-building on priority issues Review programme budgets and medium-term plans in economic and social fields with support of revitalized Committee for Programme and Coordination[c]

[b] With most subsidiary bodies discontinued, the report makes several proposals to make rules governing participation in the work of the Economic and Social Council more flexible.

[c] Based on draft plans prepared by an inter-agency planning unit.

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
	Promote active participation of specialized agencies in the work of the Council **Preparations** Restructure and strengthen central secretariat so as to be able to provide intellectual direction on issues of system-wide concern	**Governing boards of funds and programmes** Consolidate governing boards of operational funds administered by the United Nations into a single Operations Board, reporting to the Economic and Social Council, with a small membership (18-27 countries)[d] **Evaluation** Create small full-time body of independent experts to provide intergovernmental organs with information on programme management and execution and progress in achieving policy goals, with Joint Inspection Unit alternatively transformed into this entity
3. Ad hoc Committee on the Restructuring of the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations system (1977)	**Working methods** Rationalize General Assembly working methods and procedures Improve coordination of Second and Third Committees with the Fifth Committee Organize work of the Economic and Social Council on a biennial basis through shorter but more frequent subject-oriented sessions spread throughout the year Convene periodic Economic and Social Council meetings at the ministerial level to review major issues **Preparations** Prepare concise and action-oriented documentation for General Assembly and Economic and Social Council sessions	**General Assembly** Serve as principal forum for global policymaking **Economic and Social Council** Act as central forum for discussion of international economic and social issues of an interdisciplinary nature Formulate policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system Monitor and evaluate implementation of General Assembly policy guidance Ensure overall coordination of the activities of the United Nations system Undertake comprehensive policy reviews of United Nations operational activities for development

[d] With operational funds maintaining fund-raising identity.

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
		Assume, to maximum extent possible, functions of subsidiary bodies Improve consultative relationships with non-governmental organizations Consolidate planning, programming and coordination responsibilities in the Committee for Programme and Coordination **Governing boards of funds and programmes** Consider establishing a single governing body responsible for management and control of United Nations operational activities for development, replacing existing governing bodies
4. North-South: A Programme for Survival: **Brandt Report** (1979)	**Working methods** Make agendas more purposeful and results-oriented, with better time management and more economical documentation Review present system of negotiations to see whether more flexible, expeditious and results-oriented procedures can be introduced without detracting from cooperation within existing groups[e]	Create a high-level Independent Advisory Body composed of 12 members, with one third from developing and developed countries and individual experts respectively, serving in their individual capacity and appointed by the Secretary-General to: • Advise Member States and the General Assembly and its organs with a view to improving the effectiveness of the United Nations and other international institutions engaged in development and international economic cooperation in achieving their global objectives[f] Establish small negotiation groups on priority issues composed of countries for which the respective issue is of most interest to facilitate consensus-building

[e] The Commission on Global Governance (discussed below) also proposed establishing a constituency-based system in executive boards of United Nations development organizations so as to facilitate more pragmatic decision-making.

[f] The reports of the proposed Advisory Group would be made available to the public.

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
		Convene occasional summits of a limited number of countries to forge commitment and advance consensus on high-priority issues as precursor for discussions in universal forums such as the General Assembly
5. Some reflections on reform of the United Nations, **Maurice Bertrand**, Joint Inspection Unit (1985)	**Working methods** Reduce overlap in agendas of intergovernmental bodies **Representation** Involve technical ministries in intergovernmental deliberations on development issues with a view to influencing national policymaking Appoint "Economic Ambassadors", coming from Ministries of Finance/Economic Affairs, part of each delegation in New York, to participate in an Economic Security Council **Preparations** Set up an interdisciplinary secretariat to service the Economic Security Council with a team of economists, sociologists and other specialists with high qualifications	Establish an Economic Security Council composed of 23 members, replacing the Economic and Social Council and the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development The Economic Security Council would play a similar role as that of the Security Council in areas of peace and security Establish a single governing body (and a single development agency) for United Nations operational activities for development at the regional level Adopt constituency-based intergovernmental negotiations based on definition of interest groups whose composition and dimensions vary according to the subject dealt with and the method of representation of these groups[g] **National level** Enhance policy coherence of Member States in intergovernmental bodies

[g] In order for negotiations to improve or alter world consensus, all participants need to agree on negotiation structures at the outset.

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6. Report of Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations: **Group of 18** (1986)	**Working methods** Undertake comparative analysis of agendas, calendars and programmes of work of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and related subsidiary bodies Rationalize agenda-setting, procedures and methods of work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in order to reduce the number of meetings and documentation Improve the system of reporting from subsidiary bodies to principal organs with a view to reducing and minimizing duplication in documentation Adopt fewer and more strategic resolutions	Consider establishing a single governing body responsible for management and control, at the intergovernmental level, of United Nations operational activities for development Improve intergovernmental review of reports of Joint Inspection Unit Strengthen independent evaluation of United Nations operational activities for development
7. Report of Special Economic and Social Council Commission on the In-depth Study of United Nations Intergovernmental Structures and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields (1988)[h]	**Working methods** Rationalize methods of work of the General Assembly in the economic and social fields Improve prioritization of policy issues to be discussed in the General Assembly each year Make representation in the Economic and Social Council universal[i] Eliminate overlap in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council agendas[j]	**General Assembly** Establish overall strategies, policies and priorities for the United Nations system in respect of international cooperation, including operational activities for development Serve as the principal forum for policymaking and provision of policy guidance on United Nations operational activities for development

[h] Chairman's text dated 4 May 1988 on the draft conclusions and recommendations of the Special Commission.

[i] In an informal paper presented by the Group of 77 on 1 September 1987, six reasons were identified for the inability of the Economic and Social Council to fulfil its mandate: (a) restricted membership; (b) expansion of its subsidiary machinery; (c) short duration of meetings; (d) inadequate secretariat support structure; and (e) lack of recognition of the Council's authority by other intergovernmental and inter-secretariat bodies of the United Nations system.

[j] The Special Commission proposed that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should establish a process of periodic review and evaluation of United Nations intergovernmental structure and functions in the economic and social fields.

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	Convene Second and Third Committees for four weeks each year Hold four-five week annual session of the Economic and Social Council in July/August each year, with a high-level segment undertaking in-depth review of selected programme areas Convene subject-oriented sessions of the Council, as appropriate[k] **Representation** Strengthen participation of executive heads of United Nations organizations in Economic and Social Council deliberations **Preparations** Improve and rationalize the system of reporting to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council Perform periodic evaluation and appraisal of quality and content of reports prepared for the Economic and Social Council Strengthen secretariat support	**Economic and Social Council** Serve as the central forum for substantive coordination of international economic and social issues of global and interdisciplinary nature and for formulation of recommendations to Member States and the United Nations system Provide coordination of activities of the United Nations system Monitor and evaluate implementation of General Assembly policies Recommend to the General Assembly overall priorities and policy guidance on operational activities for development — the Third (Programme and Coordination) Committee of the Council would devote its deliberations to operational activities[l] Discuss each year a limited number of operational issues requiring coordination and harmonization of action among relevant United Nations system organizations Undertake a comprehensive policy review of operational activities every three years Obtain regular reports from the specialized agencies on steps taken to give effect to relevant recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council **Governing boards of funds and programmes** Exercise responsibility for the formulation, appraisal, approval, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects

[k] In an informal discussion paper presented by Canada, universal membership of the Economic and Social Council was proposed, as well as organization of the work programme along five main sectoral lines, which would be served by three Committees of the Council, with one focusing on United Nations operational activities for development.

[l] In an informal discussion paper, Japan proposed the creation of a sessional committee of the Council to deal solely with coordination of operational activities for development.

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
8. Challenge to the South: the Report of the **South Commission** (1990)		**Summit of leaders** Establish a representative group of leaders of developed and developing countries under the auspices of the United Nations to periodically review the world economic situation, prospects for development and the environment • Recommend guidelines for action by the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other major actors on the global scene
9. The United Nations in Development: reform issues in the economic and social fields — **A Nordic Perspective** (1991)	**Working methods** Systematize General Assembly and Economic and Social Council agenda-setting Make greater use of groups with limited membership to deal with specific issues or sectors Minimize overlaps in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council mandates **Preparations** Streamline reporting to the Economic and Social Council	Establish an International Development Council, as a high-level forum to discuss development issues and provide overall guidance on United Nations operational activities for development: • Focusing on normative aspects of development, delegating administrative and managerial issues to a system of Executive Boards • Absorbing policy functions of five boards (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP) and International Fund for Agricultural Development), while Executive Boards, composed of no more than 20 representatives, provide policy guidance to senior management on a continuous basis • Replacing either Second or Third Committee of General Assembly, ensuring universal participation, or constituted as one segment of the Economic and Social Council, with 54 members International Development Council role would resemble that of the Development Committee of the World Bank

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10. United Nations Development Programme **Human Development Report** (1992)		Create a Development Security Council, composed of 11 permanent members and 11 on the basis of rotational election to:[m] • Design broad policy for all development issues, ranging from food security to ecological security, from humanitarian assistance to development assistance, from debt relief to social development, from drug control to international migration • Prepare a global revolving five-year budget of development resources flows • Provide the policy coordination framework for smooth functioning of international development and financial institutions
11. Renewing the United Nations system: **Erskine Childers and Brian Urquhart** (1994)	**Working methods** Extend working periods of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council Explore ways to enhance negotiation and decision-making capacities of poorer countries in the General Assembly and the Council Improve traditions and timings of debate, traditional composition of resolutions and discipline in requesting reports, including proscribing their length Introduce "Question time" in the General Assembly **Representation** Promote more strategic composition of participants in Economic and Social Council deliberations	Establish a United Nations System Consultative Board, reporting to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, comprising Economic and Social Council Bureau members, bureaux of executive governing bodies of major agencies, and one representative of each other agency to formulate common policy approaches on all matters requiring system-wide efforts Convene Board biennially to review progress in system-wide implementation of selected policies and programmes, including United Nations-wide reform efforts Establish a General Committee, as a standing capacity of the General Assembly, to monitor and evaluate its discharge of responsibilities for coordination of policies and activities of agencies under Article 58 of the Charter of the United Nations

[m] The report argued that the size of the Economic and Social Council makes it difficult for the Council to exercise its coordination role.

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	Preparations Improve Economic and Social Council documentation, and make it more strategic, in order to attract ministerial attendance Designate one focal point within the Secretariat to plan, marshal and monitor the quality, coherence and volume of socio-economic documentation Undertake a business process review of legislative support services	Establish a single governing body for United Nations operational activities for development at the regional level, under the auspices of the respective Regional Commission Examine reports of regional governing entities in a single global governing body for United Nations operational activities for development, providing overall global policy guidance and accountability, with a report submitted to the Economic and Social Council The General Assembly to review and debate every five years over all global, interregional, regional and country policies in operational development programmes
12. Our Global Neighbourhood: Report of the **Commission on Global Governance** (1995)	**Working methods** Make modus operandi of the Economic Security Council practical and efficient Promote informal exchanges in the Economic Security Council among national leaders Streamline and modernize procedures of the General Assembly and its committees Reduce and rationalize the General Assembly agenda Make the General Assembly work more focused and results-oriented Convene the General Assembly theme session in the first half of each year on a major priority issue Merge the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly Enhance opportunities for intellectual dialogue among leaders in the General Assembly	Create an Economic Security Council composed of no more than 23 members • Assess overall the state of the world economy and interaction between major policy areas • Provide long-term strategic policy framework for stable, balanced and sustainable development • Secure consistency between policy goals of major international institutions • Promote consensus-building for evolution of international economic system Retire the Economic and Social Council Submit major recommendations of the Economic and Social Council subsidiary bodies to the Economic Security Council, others to merged Second and Third Committees, with non-governmental organization accreditation shifted to the General Assembly

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
	Reduce overlapping in the agendas of the Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees **Representation** Heads of State and finance ministers to participate in the Economic Security Council **Preparations** Imaginative and unconventional approach required to service the Economic Security Council Secretariat staff and research capacity of high-quality with ability for strategic thinking on economic, social and environmental issues Consider inviting competitive bidding from United Nations and private agencies for any significant piece of work done on behalf of the Economic Security Council Foster substantive collaboration between staff of the Economic Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, the International Labour Organization and others	**Governing boards of funds and programmes** Provide operational governance of respective entities Establish a constituency-based system so that all countries have a voice on executive boards
13. A world in need of leadership: tomorrow's United Nations — a fresh appraisal — **Erskine Childers and Brian Urquhart** (1996)	**Representation** Enhance the strategy-negotiating and coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council through a more strategic composition of participants in the Council's deliberations	Establish a United Nations System Consultative Board comprising Economic and Social Council Bureau members, bureaux of executive governing bodies of major agencies, and one representative of each other agency to formulate common policy approaches on all matters requiring system-wide efforts Establish a single governing body for United Nations operational activities for development, with regional governing bodies for programmes in each region

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
		National level Enhance policy coherence of Member States in intergovernmental bodies
14. The United Nations in Development — Strengthening the United Nations through change: fulfilling its economic and social mandate — **The Nordic United Nations Reform Project** (1996)	**Working methods** Consolidate the agendas of Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly Convene the Economic and Social Council whenever necessary to address urgent developments in the economic, social and related fields requiring guidance and coordination by the Council Review subsidiary structure of the Economic and Social Council in order to assess whether tasks can be absorbed by the Council and other forums **Preparations** Improve preparations for substantive meetings of the Economic and Social Council, with higher-quality reporting, a focused agenda and a more active Bureau Compile sectoral, operational and agency-oriented reports into a consolidated Economic and Social Council report on development	Establish a functionally integrated governance system: **General Assembly, United Nations conferences and treaty-making bodies** Perform agenda, norm and standard-setting through dialogue and negotiations; policymaking; and oversight of subordinate bodies of the United Nations system **Economic and Social Council** Provide policy guidance to all parts of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies and regional commissions; coordination of intergovernmental, inter-agency and operational activities, particularly with respect to implementation of comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly and integrated follow-up to United Nations conferences, including assessment of analyses and data collection; priority-setting as regards resources and activities; and consolidation of medium-term plans and budgets Strengthen Economic and Social Council guidance to functional commissions and expert bodies **Governing bodies of funds, programmes and agencies** Undertake policy interpretation, preparation and application; strategy development; approval of programmes and budgets; oversight of operations management; and monitoring and evaluation

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		Long-term vision Unified governance arrangement for consolidated United Nations development system
15. Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform — **report of the Secretary-General** (1997)	**Working methods** Conceptualize and organize the General Assembly agenda around the priorities of the United Nations medium-term plan Consider holding Economic and Social Council segments at different pre-established periods during the year, without affecting totality of Council meetings Extend the duration of the operational activities segment to enable the Council to provide effective policy guidance on the work of different programmes and funds Adopt ex-ante, rather than ex-post, review by the Council of the work programme of functional commissions Convene meetings of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF back-to-back, with joint meetings, as appropriate, and with joint committees comprising members of both Boards to review issues and matters of common concern **Representation** Economic and Social Council segments attended by ministers directly concerned with respective themes. Active participation of least developed countries, beneficiaries of operational activities, is especially important in order to render the dialogue more meaningful	**Economic and Social Council** Rethink the role of the Economic and Social Council, possibly providing it with greater authority under the Charter Consolidate and reconfigure the Economic and Social Council subsidiary machinery Replace the Committee on Development Policy by a panel of experts on relevant policy issues set-up by the Economic and Social Council on an ad hoc basis, with members appointed on the recommendation of the Secretary-General Promote closer integration of governance oversight of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, with consecutive and/or joint meetings of Executive Boards, and convene joint committees to review issues and matters of common concern

Study/report	*Working methods, representation, preparations*	*Intergovernmental governance*
	Establish trust fund to facilitate participation of ministers and/or high-level officials of least developed countries in operational activities segment **Preparations** Improve preparations for the operational activities segment so that policy issues arising from the reports of the Executive Boards of funds and programmes are effectively identified, and the level of participation in the Council that can give the necessary political weight to policy prescriptions emanating from it, is promoted	
16. The role of the annual joint meeting[n] of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes — Informal note by **Anthony Beattie**, President of the Executive Board of the World Food Programme (2004)	**Working methods** Adopt a more strategic approach to agenda-setting, planning two to three years in advance Improve the quality of the debate Aim to achieve operationally useful conclusions Encourage discussions on the outcome of the annual joint meeting in the Executive Boards Invite the Executive Boards to report back on implementation of the conclusions of the annual joint meeting of the Boards Exploit synergies by reflecting objectives and current concerns of the annual joint meeting of the Boards in terms of reference for joint field visits	

[n] The annual joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the four funds and programmes (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP) originates in General Assembly resolution 52/12. The resolution "accepts that management of funds and programmes would be enhanced by greater integration of intergovernmental oversight, and requests the Economic and Social Council, in the context of the next triennial policy review of the United Nations, during its operational activities segment of 1998, to consider arrangements for closer integration of the governance oversight of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, and of the United Nations Children's Fund, with consecutive and/or joint meetings of the existing Executive Boards, bearing in mind the respective mandates of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes".

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17. Assessment of value-added of joint meetings of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/ United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme — **report of the Secretary-General** (E/2004/60)		Consider adopting a more formal approach to the annual joint meeting of the Boards, e.g. granting decision-making authority Examine how an empowered annual joint meeting of the Boards would advance system-wide coherence and agreed development goals, including recommendations of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review Conduct periodic reviews of relevance and effectiveness of annual joint meeting of the Boards, including complementarity with the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council
18. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations: an issues paper — **Gert Rosenthal** (2005)	**Working methods** Organize Economic and Social Council segments at different intervals throughout the year Strengthen the focus on Economic and Social Council core functions Reduce formality in Economic and Social Council proceedings **Representation** Assume present disconnect between Economic and Social Council natural constituency and national economic policymaking at country level as "given" **Preparations** Improve technical quality of inputs to Economic and Social Council meetings	**Economic and Social Council** Reduce Economic and Social Council membership to 50 countries Achieve consensus on Economic and Social Council subsidiary status to the General Assembly Serve as a Council of Ministers for Economic and Social Affairs with authority to review medium-term plans, or equivalent, of all United Nations system organizations Coordinate follow-up to outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits Undertake in-depth policy debates in the Council with decisions adopted by the General Assembly Establish a closer relationship with the Security Council

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		Strengthen partnerships with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in order to give the Council better access to ministries of finance, trade and development Bring non-governmental and private sectors more fully into the work of the Council
19. Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence: Delivering as One (2006)	**Working methods** Establish clear lines of accountability among different governance mechanisms in order to promote robust oversight of United Nations system performance and results **Representation** Comprise a Sustainable Development Board with senior officials from development, planning, finance and foreign ministries, with appropriate skills and competence **Preparations** Establish a Development Policy and Operations Group, supported by a Development Finance and Performance Unit, composed of talented officials from all parts of the United Nations system to provide high-quality support to the Sustainable Development Board	Establish a Global Leaders Forum comprised of leaders of 27 countries rotating on the basis of geographical representation, with participation of executive heads of major international economic and financial institutions: • Provide leadership on development and global public goods-related issues • Develop long-term strategic policy framework to secure consistency in policy goals of major international institutions • Promote consensus-building among Governments on integrated solutions for global economic, social and environmental issues Create a Sustainable Development Board, superseding the annual joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the funds and programmes and a meeting at the ministerial level, when required. The main tasks of the Board would be to: • Endorse "One Country" programmes and approve related allocations • Maintain strategic overview of the system • Review implementation of global normative and analytical work of the United Nations in relation to "One United Nations" at the country level

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		• Oversee management of funding mechanism for Millennium Development Goals • Review performance of Resident Coordinator system • Consider and comment on strategic plans of funds, programmes and specialized agencies • Commission periodic strategic reviews of "One Country" programmes • Consider and act on independent evaluation, risk management and audit findings **Governing bodies of funds and programmes** Consider issues requiring particular agency focus including those relating to multi-year funding frameworks **National level** Establish all-of-government approach in Member States to international development to ensure coordination in positions taken by their representatives in decision-making structures of all relevant organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions